

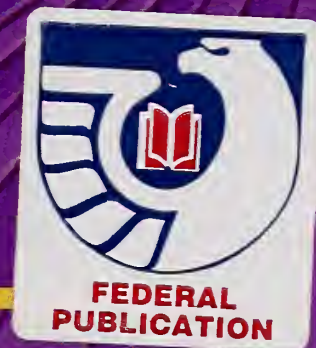
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Leading America

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no. 312



in ending hunger *and* improving nutrition & health

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

***F**or over three decades, the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has led America's fight against hunger and provided nutrition assistance through high integrity programs delivered by State and local partnerships, serving more than 50 million Americans per year.*



Our mission is to increase food security and reduce hunger by ensuring better access to food, a more healthful diet, and nutrition education for children and low-income families. Nutrition assistance programs build a strong foundation to help families eat better, learn better, and earn better.



FNS Nutrition Assistance Programs: Strengthening the Nutritional Safety Net

Food Stamp Program

First Line of Defense Against Hunger

The Food Stamp Program currently serves about 20 million children and adults a month. The program provides monthly nutrition assistance for eligible participants to purchase approved food items at approved food stores. Eligibility is based on household size, income, assets, and other factors. Over half of all participants are children; one out of ten is a low-income older adult.

Step 1, a pre-screening tool available at www.FoodStamps-Step1.usda.gov, is a quick way to determine eligibility and get an estimate of monthly benefits.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Healthier Mothers and Babies

WIC is working for 7.5 million low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum mothers, and infants and children up to 5 years old. The program provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, and access to health services. Participants redeem vouchers for specific foods that contain nutrients frequently lacking in the diet of low-income mothers and children.

Child Nutrition Programs

Eating to Learn, Learning to Eat

- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Special Milk Program

FNS partners with schools, local government agencies, and private non-profit organizations to provide nutritious meals and a healthy eating environment for school children of all ages. School meals and child nutrition assistance programs are now serving more than 28 million children every school day.



These programs are updated and improved as needed to better meet the nutrition and health requirements of all children.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program

Provides commodity foods to States for distribution to supplement food stocks of households, soup kitchens, and food banks.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Distributes food directly to more than 430,000 women, infants, children, and elderly every month, with food packages tailored to the nutritional needs of participants.

Food Assistance for Disaster Relief

Furnished by FNS to State relief agencies and organizations like the Red Cross and Salvation Army in times of natural disasters. Tens of thousands of survivors of natural disasters are fed by FNS and its partners every year.



The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Supplies commodity foods to low-income families who live on Indian reservations and to Native Americans living near reservations. Nearly 110,000 people participate each month.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Provide block grant cash. These governments distribute benefits in different ways. Puerto Rico gives participants electronic benefits on a card like a bank card. American Samoa and the CNMI provide vouchers that can be exchanged for food.



For more information, contact:

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
FNS-312
December 1999
Revised July 2003